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People Stay Warm for Keshmish Tree Lighting



Singers from St. Michael's Church Choir harmonize during the 2011 Keshmish Tree Lighting Monday night at the Window Rock Tribal Park. More than 60 people attended the hour-long ceremony.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The damp chilly air Monday night was a reminder that winter was upon us. The lighted Keshmish tree was a reminder that the Holiday season is also upon us.

More than 60 people attended the 2011 Keshmish Tree Lighting ceremony at Window Rock Tribal Park and Veteran's Memorial Monday evening.

"I want to wish everyone a safe a joyful Holiday Season," said President Ben Shelly.

The evening was filled with Christmas caroling from the St. Michael's Church Choir and students

from Window Rock Elementary School. The audience also heard singing from Miss Navajo Crystalyne Curley.

Weather may have dampened the surroundings, but the mood was festive and appreciative. After every song sang, the audience applauded while the rain drizzled down in the night sky.

"I had a great time. It was awesome," said Curley.

An attendee brought his entire family out to see the Keshmish Tree.

"I brought the whole clan out here," said one attendee. He pointed out his children and sister.

His family all stood listening as the St. Michael's Church Choir sang "Silent Night."

Shortly after the choir finished their set of songs, the Window Rock Elementary School students sang their rendition of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer."

But with the festive night, President Shelly and Vice President Jim wanted Navajo people to know that Navajo culture was a part of the festivities Monday night.

"We respect our land, where we come from, that is why we didn't cut down a tree to serve as our Keshmish Tree," President Shelly stated.

Two of the pinon trees in the park were decorated with lights, and weather permitting, will be lit nightly through the Holiday Season.

Vice President Jim said the Holiday Season brings forth spiritual strength.

"When our spirit is strong we are capable of a lot of things. It is the human spirit that allows us to endure and allows us to be courageous," said Vice President Rex Lee Jim.

Before and after the outdoors event, people gathered in the lobby of the Office of the President and Vice President and snacked on cookies while keeping warm with hot cocoa, coffee and hot cider. People also received paper bags fill with treats.

"We want to thank everyone for coming out despite the weather," said Chief of Staff Sherrick Roanhorse.



Miss Navajo Crystalyne Curley stays dry holding an umbrella. She said a song and encouraged the youth to get involved with their communities.

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